

VZCZCXRO4136  
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHJA #2843/01 2820854  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 090854Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6616  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4392  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1341  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3477  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0932  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1861  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002843

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, DRL, INR/EAP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: INDONESIAN ELECTIONS -- NEW COMMISSIONERS FAIL TO  
WIN PRAISE

JAKARTA 00002843 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Indonesian legislature (DPR) has unveiled the names of the new members of the Indonesian Elections Commission (KPU). The new commissioners are not highly thought of--one is entangled in a corruption case--and are widely believed to be the by-product of political horse-trading. On the positive side, most analysts believe the commissioners will not in fact hamper the highly-effective KPU apparatus, which is in charge of organizing the 2009 presidential and legislative elections. Brief bio-data is contained in para 8. END SUMMARY.

COMPETENCE NOT KEY

12. (C) On October 3, the DPR announced the new members of the KPU in a bizaare process. According to contacts, the process effectively eliminated the more competent candidates by a test which emphasized knowledge of the Indonesian political ideology of "pancasila." There was also an unconventional psychological test purportedly designed to screen out unethical candidates, according to Andrew Thornley, an American with the election-focused NGO Democratic Reform Support Program (DRSP). DPR will now submit the names to President Yudhoyono for what is expected to be rubber stamp approval. The commissioners serve for one five-year term.

13. (C) Thornley told Dep Pol/C that the final 21 candidates interviewed by DPR's Commission II (responsible for domestic affairs) were notable for their lack of collective competence while the final seven who were ultimately chosen were unknown to all expert observers. No one with national KPU electoral experience was chosen, although several have local KPU experience. "They are the best of the worst," IFES Chief of Party Adam Schmidt, an American, told Dep Pol/C.

ALLEGED CORRUPTION

14. (C) And among the new commissioners there seems to be at least one potential bad apple. Revelations that this new commissioner, Syamsul Bahri, is being investigated for corruption by the Attorney General's Office regarding development of a sugar industry area in Malang, East Java, prompted elections watchdog groups to call for the DPR to withdraw his name. Commission II reportedly is reconvening soon to consider this issue.

## A PRODUCT OF HORSE-TRADING

¶5. (C) Most electoral experts were surprised that respected NGO electoral activists they assumed would be shoe-ins for the KPU did not even make the first cut. There is also widespread suspicion that the final selections were more a result of political horse-trading than any other thoughtful, deliberative process. Thornley told Dep Pol/C that he suspected that the major political parties may have each hand-picked one or two commissioners with connections to their parties. Hadar N. Gumay, executive director of the Center for Electoral Reform, and a well-qualified candidate who was eliminated early on, said the seven had little or no electoral experience, which indicated that they were almost certainly chosen for their political connections.

## THERE ARE POSITIVES

¶6. (C) On the positive side, more women are now commissioners. The DPR insisted on a 30 percent quota and three of the new commissioners are women. There also is more geographical diversity, with new members from Sumatra, Bali and South Kalimantan, in addition to Java.

¶7. (C) Despite the new commissioners' unproven, even poor reputation, Schmidt pointed out that the KPU technical staff is highly competent and should be able to do an excellent job in organizing the upcoming elections. DRSP and other organizations also have plans to educate the new commissioners on electoral process management so that hopefully the inexperienced group can be brought up to speed.

The timeframe for carrying out the 2009 elections is very compressed, so the KPU needs to work efficiently, Schmidt noted. Voter registration begins next year--and once a new election law is passed--district demarcation, political party

JAKARTA 00002843 002.2 OF 002

and candidate registration, certification and candidate challenges will follow in short order.

## BRIEF BIO-DATA

¶8. (U) Brief bio-data on the seven new members follows:

-- Prof. H. Abdul Hafiz Anshary Az, age 51, professor at the Antasari Islamic State University in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, since 2002; previously Chairman of South Kalimantan Election Commission (2003 -2005); BA from Faculty of Islamic Court, Antasari Islamic State University, Banjarmasin, 1982; doctorate degree in Islamic Civilizations from Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University, Jakarta, ¶2000.

-- Sri Nuryanti, age 37, currently Executive Director of Research Institute for Democracy and Peace (RIDEP) and researcher on political issues at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI); previously LIPI elections research coordinator; BA from Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 1993; masters in Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2001.

-- Endang Sulastri, age 42, currently a member of the working group on Women's Political Participation at the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and lecturer at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Muhammadiyah University Jakarta; BA in Governance Studies from Gadjah Mada University, 1991; masters in Political Science, University of Indonesia, 2003.

-- I Gusti Putu Artha, age 41, member of Bali Provincial Election Commission since 2003; presenter and producer at Bali TV (2001-2002); BA Faculty of Agriculture, Udayana University, Bali; masters in Social Development, Udayana University, 2007.

-- Prof Dr Ir H Syamsul Bahri, 52 years old, head of Research

Institute at Brawijaya University, Malang, East Java, since 2005; expert staff for East Java Regional Parliament; BA Brawijaya University, 1980; masters Padjadjaran University, West Java, 1986; doctorate in agriculture Airlangga University in Surabaya, East Java, 1997.

-- Andi Nurpati, 41 years old, lecturer at State Madrasah (high school) in Bandar Lampung since 1996; previously member of Lampung Provincial Election Supervisory Committee, 2004; BA Alauddin Islamic State University in Makassar, 1992; postgraduate course from Deakin University, Melbourne, 2000; masters in education technology Lampung University, 2006.

-- H Abdul Aziz, 53 years old, researcher at Research and Development Body and Training Center at Ministry of Religious Affairs since 2005; previously Director of Islamic Studies Development for Public Schools and Director of Islamic Studies Education and Pesantren; bachelor degree in Arabic Language and Culture from Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University in Jakarta, 1981; masters in Anthropology and Sociology, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, 1992.

HEFFERN